

**Minutes**  
**Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission**  
**June 23, 2015 at 7:00 pm**

**Members present:**

Ermete J. Raffaelli, Chairman  
Wayne Jonas Bealer, Vice Chairman  
Michael E. Lauter, Secretary  
William F. Cinfici, Assistant Secretary

**Staff present:**

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office

**Others present:**

Kimberly M. Fasnacht, SSM Group Inc.  
Adam J. Brower, Edward B. Walsh & Associates Inc.  
Henry M. Koch Jr., Koch & Koch  
Charlie S. Schmehl, Urban Research & Development Corporation  
Brian P. Kelly, Redesign Reading Community Development Corporation  
Craig D. Peiffer, Zoning Office  
Keith Smoker, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the June meeting to order, and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Miller looked to Mr. Kelly to explain his late request. Mr. Kelly called it the '18th Ward Oakbrook Neighborhood Development Project', presented on behalf of a stakeholder group applying for a Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PADCED) grant that requires an authorization letter from the municipal planning agency. The Commission members questioned the timing of the presentation, the parties responsible for the application, and the terms of the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program grants. They wouldn't commit to taking any action, given the late notice. Mr. Kelly also offered to address the 'pump track' project that he said was included on the May agenda without his knowledge or consent. Mr. Miller disputed that representation, based on a meeting and agreement between them April 14th. Mr. Cinfici moved to accept the June 23rd agenda, with time for the additional presentation at the end. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the modified June agenda.

**Subdivision and Land Development:**

Aramark Parking Lot – parking lot land development plan [0:11.00]

Ms. Fasnacht said Aramark's representatives were unable to attend themselves. She recalled a first attempt being denied, in 2009, and recited some of the reasons cited in that denial. She said they had since been issued a zoning violation for parking on the unimproved surface. The current plan proposes 76 spaces, when including the four 'accessible' spaces. An existing entrance driveway will be moved slightly closer to the Schuylkill Avenue intersection, in order to align it with the delivery dock on the opposite side of Blair Avenue and facilitate the necessary truck maneuvers. She said the proposed driveway still meets the Zoning Ordinance's minimum requirement for its separation distance from the intersection. She briefly described the stormwater management measures, before explaining the perimeter screening and the street trees proposed for the Schuylkill and Blair Avenue frontages. She said eleven light fixtures will illuminate the lot, Mr. Miller said he'd copied the Shade Tree Administrator directly, and was still waiting for a comment. He didn't anticipate much criticism, but for the possibility of the Norway maples as an invasive species. He acknowledged that not all the trees would be classified as 'shade trees' by the ordinance's definition and regulation. Ms. Fasnacht consented to some variety changes if recommended by the City Arborist. Mr. Bealer recalled the Commission having sought an exit closer to the Luzerne Street intersection, in order to better accommodate the queuing of traffic toward Schuylkill Avenue. Ms. Fasnacht said Aramark was resisting that idea, due to the cost, noting that only one entry/exit was required by the Zoning Ordinance. She said the queuing of cars would remain within the parking lot. Mr. Lauter recalled the issue differently; a concern for a tendency of exiting vehicles to block the westbound lane of Blair Avenue, and a preference for a second driveway. He asked how many cars would be leaving at any one time. Ms. Fasnacht said the company employed 89 in all, but wasn't certain of the shift arrangements. Mr. Cinfici asked about the route intended for the then-pedestrians to enter and leave the parking lot, to and from their vehicles. Ms. Fasnacht said there was nothing dedicated, expecting they'd use the same driveway. Mr. Miller explained that the application is subject to new stormwater regulations that the 2009 plan wasn't. He recalled Aramark's concerns for security and

visibility in minimizing the landscaping and screening effect along the street frontages. He said the current plan resolves that and, but for the driveway issue, provided everything the Commission was seeking at the time. Asked if the driveway was wide enough to accommodate both the pedestrians and the cars, he said Aramark had described the staggering of their shifts, leaving the impression that there wouldn't be any 'peak' volumes. He said a defined walkway would be nice, and that Aramark may eventually find a need to reinforce any shortcuts used. Ms. Fasnacht confirmed there wouldn't be any gates or fencing. She said she wasn't aware of any existing problems with unauthorized parking or trespass. Mr. Miller thought the on-street parking available in the immediate area met the neighborhood demand. Mr. Bealer observed higher volumes of traffic at the closing time of another business on Blair Avenue. Mr. Miller said he was still waiting on some additional documentation, and for those reasons recommended the plan be tabled. He added that he was all but satisfied from the Land Development Ordinance perspective. Asked about the Public Works Department's review, Ms. Fasnacht characterized it as requests for clarification and some additional documentation, but nothing that would change the layout shown. Mr. Miller confirmed that a compliant lighting plan was included in the set. He didn't anticipate any major issues from the County Planners, as they had reviewed the original plan 2008, and expected the Zoning Administrator to soon issue a permit. Ms. Fasnacht added that the conditions of the zoning permit will require a bike rack, and that it may be installed on the other side of the Avenue at the Aramark facility.

Mr. Bealer moved to table the 'Aramark Parking Lot' plan, pending the other required reviews and permits. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to table Aramark's parking lot plan.

#### Plastic Compounding Project (Phoenix Technology Division) – sketch land development plan [0:31.07]

Ms. Fasnacht said the applicant will be Evergreen Community Power LLC, formally, and a brief discussion of the group of companies and their relationships followed. She said the 'interior' parts of this plastic-extrusion project were being handled by Entech Engineering Inc., and involved a change of use and a special-exception (zoning) hearing. She said SSM Group Inc. was taking responsibility for the exterior improvements, including a 15-foot-high retaining wall, to flatten an area for truck access, and the areas for the eventual installation of other equipment, including cooling towers, transformers, ash blowers and silos. She also proposed a 'pipe bridge' carrying two 6-inch pipes and a cable conduit between the facility and the existing power plant. She said the Planning Office had advised seeking a land development waiver, based on the limited construction. They've already submitted for the Berks County Conservation District's approval, and hoped to have it within the next week. Mr. Bealer recognized it as the former Eagle Distributing Company building, and asked if the parcels – 850 Laurel Street and 800 South Street – would remain separate and, if so, require an easement. Mr. Miller said that should be considered, unless the parcels could be consolidated, and again referred to his own confusion over the multiple corporate entities. Mr. Raffaelli asked about the building's current use and occupancy. Ms. Fasnacht understood it to be vacant, except for some storage. Mr. Raffaelli asked if the pelletizing operation would create additional noise, referring to the experience with the operation of the Evergreen power plant. Ms. Fasnacht thought that would be considered as part of the special-exception hearing. Mr. Miller said he was considering the matter as separate projects, and believed this part qualified for the waiver, while conceding that there have been issues observed with the biomass project. Mr. Cinfici wondered how the plastics operation related to what was otherwise a recycled-paper concern. Ms. Fasnacht considered it a separate operation altogether. Mr. Raffaelli asked about the anticipated increase in truck traffic. He acknowledged that the outward changes to the property appeared to meet the criteria for a small-project waiver, but cautioned against dismissing the quality-of-life concerns – traffic, fumes and noise – associated with heavy industry in a residential setting. He thought the 'good will' previously offered by the Commission had, at times, been premature, and noted that other City departments and boards hadn't adequately considered or responded to those issues. He remarked on the deteriorating condition of the Bingaman Street Bridge, and the impression that it has accelerated in the last few years. Ms. Fasnacht didn't have any answers to questions about the operation, deferring to Entech, and acknowledging the developer's 'risk' if moving ahead with the site improvements before the zoning appeal. Mr. Miller explained that he hadn't advised SSM to prepare that information, and hoped the Zoning Hearing Board would recognize and enforce the performance standards of their Ordinance. He said the traffic impact is certainly within the Commission's purview, though still lacking any ordinance-type tools to influence it. He said he may have been too focused on the site considerations, and intended to communicate the nuisance concerns to the Zoning Office. He said the Commission could make it a condition of a waiver, or delay its action altogether. Ms. Fasnacht reminded that Evergreen was looking to get started on those site improvements in the next week. Mr. Miller suggested a waiver, limited to the retaining wall and the equipment pads. Mr. Lauter noted a tendency of such fractional approvals to be later used as the principal justification in allowing the rest, especially where it could be demonstrated that the context of the larger project was understood. He sensed that any pushback later on could be characterized as 'obstruction'. Mr. Miller alluded to his personal concerns, and hoped the Hearing Board would account for those things specifically within its authority to enforce or vary. The discussion turned to the specifics of the accessory equipment. Ms. Fasnacht knew the pipe bridge was

needed for the electric supply, but was less certain if it might be used to convey steam. She said the silos would stand at 35 feet, and the cooling towers at 15. Asked if any variances were being sought, apart from the special exception, Ms. Fasnacht again referred to Entech's role and her limited understanding of the whole operation. Mr. Cinfici asked if any new energy production was associated with this project. Ms. Fasnacht understood that function to be limited to the existing power plant. Mr. Raffaelli said he would prefer answers to his questions, and deferred to his colleagues on the way to proceed. Asked about the timing of the zoning hearing, Ms. Fasnacht thought they were aiming for the August hearing, for a September decision. She said she'd met with the Zoning Administrator earlier that day, but needed to submit some supplemental documentation required for a complete application. The Commission discussed the wording of a limited waiver, and the matter of an easement for the pipe bridge.

Mr. Bealer moved to grant a limited waiver for the construction of the retaining wall and the electrical interconnection, advising an easement for its bridge, if not an annexation of the separate parcels, reserving judgment on the installation of the other equipment pending the outcome of the zoning hearing, and requiring the provision of an eventual site plan to the Planning Office, detailing the approvals. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted 3 to 1 in favor of the partial waiver, with Mr. Raffaelli casting the dissent.

Resolution #25-2015

#### Piazza Acura Building Addition – sketch subdivision and land development plan [1:00.39]

Mr. Koch introduced himself as an attorney representing the applicant. Mr. Brower mentioned working with the Planning Office to revise and clarify a proposal previously submitted as two separate applications and since combined. He appreciated the opportunity to present the concept and gather any early input. He said the scope involves two separate properties, and is being driven by a manufacturer-required updating. He said the Acura dealership requires a 3150-square-foot building addition, which would still fall short of the manufacturer's standard but has been approved in the context of the existing building and available space. He said it would provide for a detailing area, currently housed in the adjacent Honda dealership building. He said the plan proposes an adjustment of the parcel boundaries, relative to the existing driveway openings and the location of a body work and painting building at the rear of the Acura property. He said it would move the line around the inventory, and include the necessary cross easement. He said the applicant is trying to consolidate all the service activity on one parcel. Mr. Miller wondered if the applicant was intending to further incorporate the entities or sell one of the dealerships currently under the same ownership. Mr. Brower understood it to have more to do with the manufacturer's demands, though uncertain of the actual purpose beyond the allocation of storage space. Mr. Koch suggested the easement as an appropriate and acceptable condition of an approval. Mr. Miller asked about their original intent, reflected in the initial application, to subdivide the parcel through the existing Honda building. Mr. Brower thought the applicant preferred the division of the sales and service/repair areas, in what was clearly a single building otherwise. He said they'd eventually be modifying that building to satisfy Honda's own demands, but not yet sure if that would include a building addition. Mr. Miller recalled an earlier interest in a new service door and driveway to the Honda building. Mr. Brower remembered complications with the highway-occupancy application in abandoning that initiative. Mr. Miller thought the revised layout simpler and more likely to be approved. He advised a thorough review of the zoning data, in order to identify any new nonconformities created by the subdivision. Mr. Brower explained that the building addition would be placed over an area of existing impervious surfacing. Mr. Miller clarified that analysis must account for any new encroachments on the setbacks or other dimensional standards that may be caused by the movement of parcel boundaries. Mr. Brower said their survey hadn't included the locations of existing utility services and, as nothing would be extended by new laterals or otherwise disturb the streets, hoped for a waiver of the required detail. Mr. Miller said the Commission would need the input of some other reviews, but acknowledged some precedent for building additions served fully from within their existing structures. Mr. Brower affirmed that the proposal wouldn't involve any new impervious cover or changes in the site's stormwater management, and intended to submit a revised application in time for the July meeting.

#### **Other business:**

#### §302.a review-draft comprehensive plan public meeting [1:15.40]

Mr. Schmehl introduced himself as a consultant to the City, and referred to the materials forwarded in advance of this presentation. He displayed the accompanying maps, and noted the highlighted areas of revision. He provided a collection of excerpts from the plan's full text, and described the plan as a set of policies for the preservation and development of the City for the next ten to fifteen years. He noted that the plan is not a regulation in itself, but a foundation for the land-use policies that follow. He recited the several issues the plan attempts to address. He mentioned on-line and paper surveys of the resident public, including a number of students, interviews with 40 'knowledgeable persons' involved in the local business entities, colleges, and other organizations, a 25-member steering committee that met monthly, and a subcommittee on specific land-use issues. He said they'd held

four public meetings, in different areas of the City, and already briefed City Council. He said the effort involved a lot of mapping, and anticipated another revision by July 2nd, incorporating any comments received from the Planning Commission and several other entities reviewing the draft concurrently. He expected a public hearing with City Council, and adoption to follow, and mentioned a looming grant deadline. He said much of the steering committee's discussion centered on land-use policies that would make development easier in the 'right locations', citing a number of 'nonconforming' uses that complicate the administration of the Zoning Ordinance. He hoped the regulations would then more-accurately reflect what already exists, and so minimize the nonconformities. He said the plan also promotes walking and biking options, with a 'complete streets' component, and the integrity of the 'urban character', by advocating shallower building setbacks with off-street parking put to the sides and rears of those buildings. He said the plan would promote 'quality of life', generally, and referred to an existing land-use map. He said the plan doesn't propose any 'revolutionary changes', but makes it easier to convert older industrial buildings to mixed use – commercial first floors, and residential occupancies above – especially in the already-residential areas. He mentioned the City of Lancaster's experience in having made the same their priority. He said such conversions are not currently allowed in the manufacturing districts, and that the plan recognizes areas where uses are already mixed. He said the goal is to recognize the many nonconformities and allow low-intensity commercial uses that compliment the residential areas – offices, day cares, personal services, certain retail fronts – with restricted hours protecting the residential neighbors. He hoped to promote a wider range of uses and a good distribution of commercial uses, in order that all residents are able to walk to stores and other basic needs. Included in some more-specific policies, he mentioned the redevelopment of what has become known as the 'Riverside Industrial Area', where the steering committee preferred the optional 'Riverfront Redevelopment Overlay' zoning, should someone offer a different vision than an industrial park. He mentioned the possibility for mixed uses, and the addition of student housing in the area of North 11th and Rockland Streets, and for additional entertainment options around FirstEnergy Stadium.

Mr. Bealer stressed the need for a general proofreading, and identified a number of recurring grammatical errors and other confusions in sentence structure. He suggested the proposed 'residential-light commercial' limitations on drive-through services, to banks and pharmacies, might trigger a legal challenge from the food-service businesses. Mr. Schmehl felt the difference in their character and impact – more heavily used and in later hours – to justify a distinction. Mr. Bealer supported the proposed expansion of the 'neighborhood commercial' concept, given the demand and the instances of successful integration elsewhere within the City. He thought the number of zoning map changes proposed to be excessive and complicated to enact. Mr. Schmehl said it would only affect about five percent of the City, by area, and recommended they be enacted simultaneously, as a City-wide application wouldn't require the posting of notifications on individual parcels. Of another proposed policy for a cooperative neighborhood parking venture between the Reading Redevelopment Authority and Reading Parking Authority, Mr. Bealer recalled that it had already been tried, before failing, as the Parking Authority preferred to focus on its downtown mission. Mr. Schmehl said the Parking Authority's current director had expressed a renewed interest, if the fees would cover their costs. Mr. Bealer referred to proposed 'trail linking' projects appearing throughout the draft plan that may be more-appropriately organized in a dedicated section. He mentioned inconsistencies found in the references to the City's 2012 Market Value Analysis (MVA) recommendations and the Reinvestment Fund (TRF) model. He noted the recommendations on forming neighborhood crime watches and parent-teacher organizations having failed in previous attempts, ostensibly due to the home and work situations of the target population. Mr. Schmehl said the suggestion came from their 'key-person' interviews, and revealed that some such organizations already exist. Mr. Bealer offered that Centre Park has a record of neighborhood-based initiatives that most other neighborhoods do not. Of a policy aimed at increasing parking options on vacant land, he said one of the Blighted Property Review Committee's goals was to instead combine single, vacated parcels for bigger yards with the remaining homes, for their convenience and resale values. He said the typical single lots have proved too narrow for parking designs according to the zoning standards. He hoped to see the implementation of the on-line code-enforcement procedures mentioned. Mr. Schmehl said the feedback indicated a heavy burden on employee time spent in data entry. Mr. Bealer challenged the language promoting an effort at pursuing the Norfolk Southern Corporation's 'excess land' for redevelopment opportunities. He recalled that, when Norfolk Southern assumed the assets of Conrail, they did subdivide and sell some of the unused land. He noted that what many people presume to be vacant railroad property is either not, or already in the hands of other businesses (*i.e.* Yeager Supply Inc.).

Turning to the plan's directives on tax policy, Mr. Bealer countered the characterization of the earned-income tax burden, with the context of the Taxpayer Relief Act (Act 1 of the special session of 2006) and its shift commensurate with the 'homestead exclusion', while noting that the City hadn't seen all that the legislature projected. He said it was, in part, a response to the many rental properties, in an effort to expand the contributing base. Mr. Schmehl contrasted the City's total earned-income tax rate of 3.6 percent against the rest of the Commonwealth, where only the cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh rank higher. He said that almost every other municipality levies between 1 percent and 2 percent, and felt the City's rate 'a major detriment' in attracting new

investment. Mr. Cinfici acknowledged the lack of a 'sunset provision' or other means of repeal, but recalled an increase associated with the City's opting in to the Homeowner Tax Relief Act (Act 72 of 2004), an earlier effort at tax reform based on an expected supplement from gambling revenues. He then remarked on the real-estate-transfer tax rate which, at 4 percent, Mr. Schmehl recognized as the highest in Pennsylvania, when almost everywhere else it remains at 1 percent. That continued with a discussion of the transfer tax's relation to settlement costs and the expenses allowed to be amortized with a mortgage. Mr. Bealer weighed the effect of the depressed land values, and observed that people still seemed to be moving in, citing the School District's population as an indicator. Mr. Schmehl understood, but said they may not be the people with the capacity to support the City's services. Mr. Bealer considered the sizes of many City homes, and how their often-modest assessments combine with the homestead exclusions for tax liabilities well short of the effective millage of those in the neighboring suburbs.

About a proposed variation in the parking rates, based on demand, and the need for shuttle services, Mr. Schmehl explained that, in his experience, some will simply opt to walk instead, and the policy had been suggested by Parking Authority itself. Mr. Bealer felt that the characterization of 'excess lanes' on Washington Street, as a justification for an on-street parking lane, didn't adequately consider the peak volumes associated with rush hours and events at the downtown venues. Mr. Schmehl said the 'complete streets' concept accounts for all users and interests, including the viability of the businesses fronting them. He related the challenge in loading operations at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel, as one example. Considering the possible Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) objections, he said they'll assert themselves on matters of safety, but typically give discretion to the preferences of the local community in design. He understood that it would have already happened, but for the objections of the Police Department. Mr. Cinfici appreciated the concept, but thought it already a problem, especially in those areas used for loading or where walk-up automated-teller machines were installed. Mr. Schmehl hoped that if some legal on-street parking were available, there would be less need for the standing and double parking. He added that anything pursued would require traffic studies. He related an anecdote from a former mayor of Harrisburg who'd said it wasn't his job 'to get suburbanites home faster'. Mr. Cinfici noted the experience of navigating the often-congested downtown, and reminded that City dwellers are traveling those streets as well. Asked about the status of the 'Main Street' program referenced in the plan, Mr. Peiffer said it was being administered by the Reading Downtown Improvement District. Mr. Bealer noted the different classifications and uses of the term 'historic district' in terms of their identification in the plan. Mr. Schmehl acknowledged there ought to be an accompanying map. Mr. Peiffer said he hadn't had any success in having one made. Mr. Bealer continued with comments on sections dealing with traffic signage, and obedience to it, and known complaints about the City's directional signage generally. He recalled that the planned route for truck traffic from the Riverfront Industrial Park, to the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge, didn't account for the houses and church on West Windsor Street, and had already met resistance from the neighborhood when proposed by the former Public Works Director. He suggested the section of the plan addressing the City's parks and recreational resources be expanded, understanding an update to that specific plan to be underway. He noted some more grammatical errors, advised some changes in the identification of school facilities, and clarified that the funding for police officers in the schools had been cut by School District rather than the City. He noted the plan should elaborate on the shortcomings of the currently single point of dispatch for emergency-medical-service vehicles. Mr. Schmehl briefly mentioned 'ownership issues' complicating that arrangement. Mr. Bealer continued with some additional requested edits and formatting changes, and advised streets markings to delineate school and firehouse zones. Mr. Raffaelli suggested that a table comparing educational-attainment levels needed a comparative analysis of similar communities. Mr. Lauter questioned the historic-preservation policies proposed, and any changing role for the Historical Architectural Review Board. Mr. Schmehl noted an amendment to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code directing that zoning ordinances 'provide for protection of natural and historic features and resources' (its Section 602.g.2), and interpreted to allow the use of zoning as an alternative to the State's Historic District Act, and so avoid extensive surveys and the PHMC process. He said it was intended only for those areas not formally covered by one of the City's existing local historic districts, and the Review Board could still advise the process. He intended to clarify the language. Mr. Lauter clarified some points on changes he'd previously requested regarding some of the small public spaces (triangles) in Centre Park. Mr. Cinfici offered his support for the grammatical edits, and suggested that lighting issues be further addressed in the plan, from both the security and maintenance perspectives. Mr. Raffaelli commented on the in-house and subcontracted arrangements for the work, and on-going questions of responsibility between the City and the utility. Mr. Bealer thought that several points of the current Comprehensive Plan weren't addressed in the draft. The discussion concluded with some recollection of previous downtown planning initiatives, especially those concerning Penn Street, its median strips, travel lanes, bicycle and pedestrian considerations. Mr. Schmehl intended a revised draft, in about a week, inviting any additional comments in the meantime.

§303.a.1 review-18th Ward Oakbrook Neighborhood Development and Economic Revitalization Project [2:40.02]

Mr. Kelly thanked the board for including him in the agenda and apologized for his misunderstandings



regarding the 'pump track' presentation at the May meeting and the deadline for scheduling presentations. He hoped it wouldn't reflect on the merits of a project that involves a number of stakeholders in addition to him. He explained his intention to apply for a planning grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PADCED) 'Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program', based on the general ideas and preferences of a steering committee. He presented a map highlighting the focal points of the specific improvements, adding that some may help to satisfy the anticipated stormwater regulations coming in 2018. He hoped to return at a later date with additional detail on the component parts and the 'next steps'. In the meantime, he requested a letter endorsing the project from the perspective of the Comprehensive Plan. He referred to a list of stakeholders, and others identified at the steering committee's last meeting. He acknowledged the need for easements, for the trail connection, and the participation of the Metropolitan Edison Company (MetEd), the Berks Conservancy, and its Greater Reading Trail Partnership, the Reading Health System and UGI Utilities. Noting that Kenhorst Boulevard was scheduled for a full repaving sometime in 2016, he suggested that already-planned disturbance presented an opportunity to integrate stormwater management features. He mentioned a new urgent-care facility under development in the former Easter Seals building (1040 Liggett Avenue), acquired by the Reading Housing Authority. Asked about the nature of the grant and its related costs, he mentioned the involvement of Tom Masano Auto Group Inc., who had committed to providing the 15 percent grant match. He said no money is required from the City, with the possible exception of future streetscape enhancements already being considered. Mr. Bealer recalled the concerns raised at the May meeting about the on-going maintenance costs of new initiatives. Giving an example, Mr. Kelly said the median islands along Hancock Boulevard are currently maintained by the Housing Authority and would soon be assumed by the Masano Group. The Commission members noted a few errors in the executive summary and accompanying map provided. Mr. Kelly said that Alvernia University continues to consider its role as an 'anchor institution', and its proximity and connection to Lancaster Avenue, as part of its social justice and anti-poverty missions in the Oakbrook area, naming its O'Pake Institute as a participant in the steering committee. He also named the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation as another resource. Mr. Cinfici asked about the terms 'bike trails' and 'bike lanes', and their limitations on motorized vehicles. Mr. Kelly understood that to be forbidden, with the possible exception of powered wheelchairs. Mr. Raffaelli thought there was a regulation based on engine-displacement volume. Mr. Kelly explained that the trail project is limited to a spur connection to the existing Thun Trail (section of the Schuylkill River Trail). On further discussion of Alvernia's emerging role, Mr. Cinfici noted the possible implication for tax revenues, if they were considering further acquisition of the suburban homes near the campus. He commented on a proposed 'Welcome to Oakbrook' sign on the railroad trestle, wondering if the neighborhood at large recognized the name beyond the public housing development. He recommended the 'branding' be given further consideration, and hoped for ample opportunity for the further involvement of the neighborhood. Mr. Kelly answered that there hadn't been any, to date, alluding to an upcoming 'tenants council' meeting as the first. He added that the Wells Fargo Foundation has very specific conditions of their support, including the degree of community involvement. Of a defined boundary, he said they've been using the obvious, natural boundaries (*e.g.* the major streets, waterways and the railroad), for the initial planning effort. Asked to identify the applicant for the grant funding, he named Redesign Reading, as a nonprofit community development corporation, under the auspices of the Berks County Community Foundation, as the former had yet to receive approval of its tax-exempt status. Mr. Lauter asked about the amount sought from the grant program. Mr. Kelly said the steering committee would meet again later that week to determine pursuit of either the \$150 thousand category or a \$50-75 thousand 'planning' range that he preferred as a less-competitive start, with an opportunity to seek implementation funds later. He mentioned other possible funding sources, such as those focused on multimodal transportation and stormwater management.

Mr. Bealer moved to affirm the consistency of the '18th Ward Oakbrook Neighborhood Project' with the Comprehensive Plan, and authorize the Planning Office staff to prepare a letter for inclusion in the necessary applications. Mr. Lauter seconded. Mr. Cinfici repeated his aversion to voting on the basis of the notice given, while recognizing the merits of the initiative. He hoped the public would have sufficient opportunity to participate. Mr. Lauter agreed, explaining his offer of a vote limited to the comprehensive planning statement, if only to keep the application processes moving. He added his concern that most of the stakeholders appeared to be business entities. And the Commission voted 3 to 1 in favor of the Comprehensive Planning statement, with Mr. Cinfici casting the dissent.

#### Resolution #26-2015

Mr. Kelly left materials summarizing the bike 'pump track', now proposed for a different location, as Pandora Park was deemed 'not viable'. He confirmed that he would appear at the Commission's July meeting with further explanation.

Mr. Raffaelli asked about the solar-powered fixtures installed along the Wyomissing Creek by the former Riverplace

Development Corporation, and the arrangements for their continued maintenance. Mr. Miller said the Schuylkill River Greenway Association occasionally attends to the graffiti, and recalled that the lights were never expected to fully 'make it through the night' on the charge they receive during the day.

§513.a approval reaffirmation-Fritz Island WWTP Facilities Upgrade Project [3:20.27]

Mr. Miller explained that the Commission had conditionally approved the plan on December 23rd, with some of the required permits yet to be approved by their issuing agencies. He said the last of those had been received on June 5th and all had subsequently been detailed on the plan's coversheet, the conditions of the approval having been satisfied. He said the record sets are in his office, owing to its size, and are ready for endorsement.

Mr. Lauter moved to reaffirm the final plan approval for the Fritz Island Wastewater Treatment Plant renovation and upgrade. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to reaffirm its December 23rd final plan approval, Resolution No. 41-2014, for the 'Fritz Island WWTP Facilities Upgrade Project'.

**Resolution #27-2015**

§513.a approval reaffirmation-Super Natural Produce [3:23.26]

Mr. Miller relayed the on-going problems with the project, including additional violations of the land-development and building-code procedures since the February 24th plan approval. He nonetheless advised the Commission to reaffirm its approval. He reported that the business has been rewarded with another temporary certificate of occupancy pending the completion of the plan.

Mr. Lauter moved to reaffirm the final plan approval for Super Natural Produce. Mr. Bealer seconded. Mr. Cinfici's suggested amending the approving language to include some form of admonishment. Mr. Miller doubted it would have any effect without the support of the administration and governing body. And the Commission voted unanimously to reaffirm their February 24th final plan approval, Resolution No. 4-2015, for the Super Natural Produce grocery store expansion.

**Resolution #28-2015**

§513.a approval reaffirmation-Jet Set Restaurant Parking Area [3:26.16]

Mr. Miller expressed his frustration with the declining observance of the submission deadlines and the resort to political interference and management pressure to override the Planning Office staff on matters of ordinance-adopted deadlines. He explained that this was one of four plans submitted since Friday, in addition to the 'Oakbrook' presentation, and demanding review two working days ahead of the meeting. He said they're each a priority to somebody, and that he's been unable to convince the administration how important the reviews are, especially those of the record sets submitted for the Commission's endorsement. He said that, if rushed through, signed and recorded with errors, there isn't a court anywhere that would care what the Commission or its staff had recognized earlier in the course of the review. He advised the Commission to reaffirm the plan, anyway, but said he'd have to more-thoroughly review the plans before releasing them. He suspected that some design firms were purposefully delaying their submissions in hopes of having an error or omission missed to their benefit. He noted a pattern of having to repeat the same issues and directions in consecutive reviews, and even catching blatant alterations between the verbal approvals and the plans prepared for recording. The members discussed their possible role in making the case to the City's management, the developers and the design firms representing them. It was suggested that a letter or resolution be prepared reminding and reinforcing the minimum times for review and notifications for meeting presentations, and communicated by the Commission directly. Mr. Miller thought reasserting the already-ordained requirements wouldn't hurt, but felt that 'minds needed to change' and made to understand the risk of endorsing documents not thoroughly vetted. Discussion continued regarding the form of that communication, and the necessity of its repetition. It was agreed that the Commission would prefer to offer some flexibility in extenuating circumstances, but as the exception rather than the norm.

Mr. Raffaelli moved to recommend that the Planning Office staff draft a letter reflecting the Commission's sentiments for the members' signatures and communication to the City administration and governing body, and for future reference and possible reminders. Mr. Lauter seconded, thinking it would be helpful to have such a statement 'on hand'. Mr. Bealer suggested that an alternative would be ceasing the conditioned or reaffirming approvals without further presentation by the responsible parties. Mr. Cinfici suggested the communication be made in-person before City Council, in light of the Council President's invitation at the May meeting. And the Commission voted unanimously to request a draft communication summarizing its position regarding the plan review and meeting agenda deadlines.

**Resolution #29-2015**

Mr. Bealer moved to reaffirm the final plan approval for the Jet Set parking lot. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to reaffirm their February 24th final plan approval, Resolution No. 8-2015, for

the 'Jet Set Restaurant Parking Area'.

Resolution #30-2015

§513.a approval reaffirmation-Pendora Park Olivet Boys & Girls Club [3:52.20]

Mr. Miller said the record sets had already been signed a couple months earlier, and have been hung up on issues related to the municipal improvements agreement and the relocation of the existing pavilion.

Mr. Cinfici moved to reaffirm the final plan approval for the Olivet Club building in Pendora Park. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to reaffirm their March 24th final plan approval, Resolution No. 13-2015, for the 'Pendora Park Olivet Boys & Girls Club'.

Resolution #31-2015

review the draft May 26, 2015 meeting minutes [3:53.32]

Mr. Bealer and Mr. Cinfici each requested some grammatical corrections. Mr. Lauter moved to accept the May minutes, as corrected. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the corrected May 26th meeting minutes.

Resolution #32-2015

Mr. Lauter moved to adjourn the June meeting. Mr. Cinfici seconded. And the Commission adjourned the June 23rd meeting. – 11:00p